

Best Practices for Holding Your Hiring Managers Accountable

By Rebecca McNeil

Health care recruiters serve two important customer groups: candidates and hiring managers. Unfortunately, it can be impossible for recruiters to meet employment and candidate satisfaction goals if hiring managers don't fulfill their role in the hiring process. Successful health care organizations recognize that building a quality workforce is a team effort between recruiters and hiring managers, and both parties must assume responsibility for the part they play.

When hiring managers are held accountable for their role in the process, it dramatically reduces the time-to-fill for positions. David Szary, founder of [LEAN Human Capital](#) and The Recruiter Academy, believes that this type of "tactical client management" is one of the most effective ways to manage time-to-fill metrics and hiring manager satisfaction. LEAN Human Capital suggests that health care HR teams use four best practices to hold hiring managers accountable:

1. *Use intake sessions to clarify hiring needs and the hiring process*

These meetings between the recruiter and manager set the stage for the hiring process. Different positions have unique requirements that must be well understood before recruiting and interviewing begins. During intake sessions, recruiters and managers can identify their preferred methods for communication during the hiring process. Every hiring manager is different. Some like to communicate by email, while others prefer phone or text messages. These discussions are also a good forum for recruiters and hiring managers to articulate their expectations. [Infirmiry Health System](#) (the largest non-governmental health system in Alabama), for example, requests a two-day turnaround from hiring managers during the interview process. Recruiters monitor the process using their applicant tracking system, and if feedback is not provided, recruiters follow up within three to five days through the system and then call or email the hiring manager. Carol Statter, employment manager at Infirmiry Health System, comments, "If the hiring manager doesn't respond in a timely fashion, we will give the candidate to another hiring manager for consideration. We walk a fine line to keep the relationship intact between recruiters and hiring managers."

2. *Establish service level agreements to hold recruiters and hiring managers accountable*

The unfortunate reality of health care hiring is that significant amounts of time

are spent waiting. LEAN Human Capital has worked with numerous health care organizations to apply value stream mapping to hiring procedures. Each step in the process is identified, classified as value-added or non-value-added, and the duration of each step is quantified. David Szary notes, "We have found that 90 percent of the time in the recruitment process is non-value-added wait time and 70 percent of that time is spent waiting for hiring manager feedback." One solution is to implement a service level agreement for staffing which includes a metric for days-to-fill positions. The first step is for HR departments to work with managers to define the steps in the hiring process, as well as acceptable wait times. After goals are established, the organization can manage to those targets. [Akron Children's Hospital](#) (the largest pediatric health care provider in northeast Ohio) used voice of the customer surveys with candidates, recruiters, and hiring managers to identify expectations about response times. The hospital then defined a service level agreement that documents response time expectations for the recruiting team and hiring managers. This not only improved the hiring process for candidates, but it also gives the hospital a competitive edge. Tessa Schmidt, Employment Manager at Akron Children's Hospital, says, "One reason we implemented a service level agreement is because we don't want to lose applicants to competitors who respond more quickly."

3. *Use technology to support hiring goals and reporting*

Technology based solutions, like systems for behavioral assessment and applicant tracking, are a proven way to improve the service provided to hiring managers and strengthen the relationship between HR departments and supervisors. When organizations use pre-hire behavioral assessments to identify the best applicants, recruiters provide hiring managers with the most qualified, high quality candidates. As a result, supervisors devote less time to the hiring process and the time they do spend is more productive.

Once organizations have set a benchmark for days-to-fill, they need data to determine where the bottlenecks are in the process. Applicant tracking systems capture the historical and current data needed to analyze where the hiring process is breaking down. Akron Children's Hospital pulls information from its applicant tracking system and examines every step of the hiring process. Using this approach, organizations can identify where non-value-added time exists, such as when the candidate is routed to the first interview, between the interview and the offer, or between the offer and acceptance. David Szary observes, "Having data related to the service level agreement is invaluable to holding hiring managers accountable."

4. *Train hiring managers to use behavioral interviewing*

The use of [behavioral interviewing and structured interview guides](#) enables organizations to make high quality hiring decisions in a standardized manner across all candidates. This approach avoids closed-ended questions and instead requires candidates to describe a situation, what actions they took, and the outcome of their efforts. When hiring managers use behavioral-based interview guides, they become more accountable through use of a consistent process. By aligning questions with the organizational culture, it is also possible to anticipate which candidates will have the greatest “fit” with the department. Once supervisors understand how to elicit information that predicts potential job performance, they can be held accountable for hiring employees who are well qualified for various positions and embody the personality traits needed to thrive in the organization.

Over time, hiring managers develop the confidence needed to become more effective interviewers and appreciate the value of behavioral interviewing. Tessa Schmidt says, “Managers at Akron Children’s Hospital now rely on the behavioral interview guides because they recognize that this approach delivers a high quality interview which addresses the cultural fit piece.” Behavioral interviewing also has a positive impact on candidates. First impressions are important for applicants, as well as for employers. When interviews are conducted in a disorganized manner, quality candidates may get a negative impression and turn their job search toward other health care institutions that care more about their organizational processes. Behavioral interviewing helps both organizations and applicants put their best foot forward in the hiring process.

Health care recruiters can’t build a high quality workforce alone. Organizations with effective hiring practices realize it is essential to hold managers responsible for their role in the process. By setting clear expectations and metrics, communicating regularly, and using proven HR technologies, it is possible to eliminate non-value-added activities from the hiring process and reduce the time required to fill open positions. The result? More satisfied candidates, hiring managers, and HR teams.

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